

NOTES FROM THE BOSTON MEDICAL LIBRARY

BY JAMES F. BALLARD, *Director*

The first step in the construction of the new addition to the Library building at 8 The Fenway was completed June 1, 1931. This unit consisted of the building proper, including an office floor for the Massachusetts Medical Society and the New England Journal of Medicine. These organizations occupied their new quarters on October first.

The new wing is approximately 100 by 28 feet in size and about ninety feet in height and forms a wing to the present building and matches the facade of the original building on the Fenway.

In the addition, there will be a second reading room adjoining the present large reading room and a special filing room for pamphlets with a capacity of about 300,000 pieces.

The total cost to date has been about \$160,000 and \$100,000 will be required to complete the stacks, the filing room and the new reading room.

The ground floor is at present used as a receiving room but is designed to be easily converted into a two-story stack. The building is planned to hold eventually nine floors of stacks with a capacity of 250,000 volumes. The office floor is built into the structure at the first floor and corresponds to two stack floors. The stack room will have nine studies and twelve carrels and a combined passenger and book elevator running from the ground floor to the roof.

A new type of construction for library buildings has been used in which the wind-bracing is patterned somewhat after the type commonly seen in railroad round-houses and like structures. Also the side wall on the court and the rear wall on the street are about sixty per cent glass giving the maximum of light. This lighting plan is modeled after the plan used in modern factory construction.

In conjunction with the erection of the new building it has been necessary to make major alterations and improvements in the old building.

The former supper and smoking rooms had to be abandoned because of the necessity of providing an entrance to the offices of the New England Journal of Medicine. This portion of the building was reconstructed and made into three offices, one of which is occupied by the Editorial Staff of the Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery.

A new and larger combined supper room, exhibition hall and meeting room has been provided on the ground floor.

Mrs. Morton Prince, widow of the late Dr. Morton Prince, has converted the former periodical room on the third floor into a private reading, recreation and smoking room for the members of the Library, as a Memorial to Dr. Prince. It is entirely furnished in quartered-oak with book-cases on three walls and handsomely and comfortably furnished. A fine bas-relief of Dr. Prince by Mrs. Cressen occupies the East wall. Here will be found the books from Dr. Prince's Library, as well as the manuscripts of his various publications; periodicals on psychoanalysis and psychical research, and books

on the history of medicine and books of a general character for occasional reading.

The suite of three rooms on the first floor formerly occupied by the Directory of Nurses and more recently used for book storage is being converted into Executive offices by the family of Dr. Oliver F. Wadsworth, who was the first clerk and Secretary of the Library, as a Memorial to Dr. Wadsworth. Two of the rooms have been renovated and furnished. The first is used as an office for the secretary to the director, where all the general business of the Library is transacted, which is a decided improvement over the former crowded quarters on the reading room floor and keeps everyone from the reading room floor except readers.

The second room is the Director's office and is connected by telephone with all parts of the building, including the new wing. The third is to be furnished as a conference and study room.

In April, Dr. William N. Bullard, senior Vice-President of the Library and a life-long benefactor, passed away and left the Library his fine collection of 217 incunabula and his collection of approximately 500 16th and 17th Century medical books. Dr. Bullard also bequeathed the Library the sum of \$50,000 to be used for the purchase of medical books and manuscripts before the year 1700.

Advantage was taken of this provision and seven books dating between 1501 and 1700 were purchased during the year as well as eleven incunabula for the Building Fund.

The Library has approximately \$100,000 in trust funds, the income from which must be used for the purchase of "old books of a classical nature." During the year, twenty-two incunabula have been added to the collection which contained 296 works on December 31, 1931. Of this number, 273 were separate works and only 34 were other editions.

The following are worthy of particular mention:

Buch der Natur, Augsburg, Schonsperger, 1499. A complete, perfect, uncolored copy in a contemporary binding.

Johannes de Ketham, Fasciculus medicinae, Venice, Gregorus, 28 Mar. 1500.

Rhazes, Liber dictus Elhavi . . . Brescia, Brittanicus, 1486.

Avicenna, Canonis libri, v. (Hebrew edition) Naples, 'Azri'el Ben Josef, 1491. The only medical incunabula printed in Hebrew.

During the past year, the Library has received many notable gifts. The following are of particular interest.

A collection of 32 David Medallions of physicians.

Sets of two large and four small Chinese anatomical charts adapted from "The Golden Mirror." The charts were drawn and hand-colored by a Chinese artist and occupied his entire time for some months.

Civil War surgeon's operating chest.

Replica of the Bigelow medal of the Boston Surgical Society awarded to Dr. Turner of London.

Volume of manuscripts consisting of letters and documents forming a portion of the correspondence of James Thacher, M. D. of Plymouth, Surgeon in the Continental Army, during the Revolution, covering the period 1778-1842.

Of great importance is an unpublished sketch of the life of Dr. Thacher by his daughter Betsy H. Thacher. Letters from Generals North, Hull and Prescott, Gov. John Brooks, Daniel Shute, Dr. David Hosack, Timothy Pickering (Sec. of State and War), Jared Sparks (Pres. Harvard Univ.) Noah Webster, Benj. Russell (Editor of the Columbian Centennial) and Daniel Webster to Dr. Thacher and a series of letters from Dr. Thacher to Mr. Daniel R. Elliott of Waynesborough, Georgia, are of particular interest.

BOOK REVIEW

Dedicated to the pioneer mothers of the Western Reserve and certified by the President of the Academy of Medicine of Cleveland as being "worthy of the press," there has recently appeared an interesting little volume on "Pioneer Medicine in the Western Reserve," published by the Academy of Medicine.

Carried out in old style printing, the brochure which contains fourteen articles by Cleveland physicians is illustrated with pen and ink drawings simulating wood cuts, the work of Dr. L. J. Karnosh, Art Editor for the publications of the Academy.

The volume is of more than local interest since although the subjects of the biographical sketches were all Clevelanders, most of them originally trekked into the Western Reserve from the New England states or other Atlantic coast centers. The names of Cushing, Delamater, Thayer and others will awaken memories of an influence which reached far beyond the confines of their local practice. As one reads the volume, one is struck at once by the distinct individuality of the subjects. David Long not only ushered many of Cleveland's early settlers into the world, but maintained contact with them as a member of the City Council, as a purveyor of hardware and other commodities and as a church man of long activity and deep religious interest.

Peter Allen, whose saddlebags furnish the motif for the initial letter drawn by Dr. Karnosh for his biography, blazed trails across the country to reach the sick and afflicted. And then served a term in the Ohio House of Representatives, from which he retired disgusted at the dilatory practices of the legislature.

Theodatus Garlick engaged in the propagation of fishes, and made his own obstetrical forceps, now in the possession of the Cleveland Medical Library Museum. His genius was artistic as well as practical, for he once made a medallion of Barnum and later one of President Andrew Jackson.

Around the name of Horace Ackley gathered many local legends, large-